

Practitioner's Statement

DIA Couture

Jenae Fox

The brief was to design a brand identity for a Couture fashion label and produce four custom-made headpiece products to be featured in Paris Fashion Week. These headpieces must appeal to the target audience of high class fashion enthusiasts. As a dancer, my personal connection to this topic is my interest in costume design, an important aspect within the dance culture.

To be able to create a successful brand identity, I needed to deconstruct the features of the Couture Fashion Industry including the stylistic elements and materials that are popular amongst customers. The design process required relevant brainstorming and research to be conducted. I determined that my headpieces must be based upon an innovative theme to ensure clients be visually drawn to the collection of products. I chose to base my pieces on the theme of 'Beauty & Power' as this is a sophisticated and marketable concept that women desire to be. By researching into the headwear designed for historical icons such as Queen Elizabeth and Goddess Nefertiti, I established that sharp angles, luxurious materials and height of the headwear created a sense of power and beauty for these women. Therefore, these aesthetic qualities were incorporated throughout my designs to reflect the sophistication of my brand. The functional qualities such as stability, comfort and ergonomics of the headwear also needed to be considered to ensure the designs would withstand the movements of my models.

My crown design was inspired by the works of Viktoria Novak as her headpieces were well proportioned and constructed. Attaching a hair comb and elastic to the crown, enabled it to sit securely on the model without affecting the shape. Arturo Rios' bird-like design inspired my bird concept; where feathers were incorporated to reflect the naturalistic theme signified throughout the collateral advertising. As Couture items are custom-made, the design and production generally requires more care than a mass produced, store sold product. Therefore, I ensured all my designs demonstrated complexity and used a wide range of materials to enhance the overall visual appearance. High quality, Swarovski diamantes were utilised in my pieces to enrich the detail within the motifs and reflect the ornamentation of primary sourced designer, Janel. I was inspired by the works of Katsuya Kamo as he created headpieces using a wide range of unique materials. His designs encouraged me to incorporate textures such as mesh, beads, glitter and braiding to illustrate my ability to work with different materials.

Once my products were complete, a photoshoot was conducted to reinforce the style and ethos of my brand. The inspiration for my photoshoot was derived from photographer Patrick Demarchelier. His work evokes powerful facial expressions by lowering colour saturation and creating contrasting tones. I applied these techniques using Adobe Photoshop to my photographs which enhanced the visualisation of my Couture headpiece collection.

My brand identity was dependent on the development of the DIA Couture logo. During the concept refinement of my logo, I ensured the brand identity was sophisticated and accurately represented the theme of 'Beauty & Power'. The logo had to compliment the design collateral including swing tags, posters and business cards, therefore a versatile snowflake symbol was developed in Adobe Photoshop and utilised as a base. The logo represents the brand ethos of 'Beauty & Power' through the use of bold and contrasting tones incorporated in the simplistic layout. The typography in the

logo also reflects the theme and elegance of my brand. The sans serif font for 'DIA' comprises of monochromatic tones, clean lines and hierarchy layout, inspired by the Dolce & Gabbana logo. Without overpowering the design, I incorporated a script font for the word 'Couture' as it compliments the feministic quality of my label.

The logo's elements were heavily influenced by the design qualities of my headpieces. The snowflake symbol connected visually to the motif material used in three of the headpieces. The numerous points surrounding the snowflake closely linked with the organic form created by the motifs. The wood texture in the snowflake emblem represented the naturalistic essence of my headpieces. The bird-like headpiece inspired by Kamo relates to this texture within the brand logo as birds rely on plants and trees to survive, highlighting the powerful connection between the two natural elements. My photograph of forest trees on the business card further reinforces the connection between 'Beauty & Power', Mother Nature and my Couture headpieces.

By analysing the works of design studios such as KSD and Studio Brand, I developed an understanding of the professional standard required for advertising design collateral. For my posters promoting Paris Fashion Week, I used composite layers of text and images to depict models wearing headpieces, showing clients how powerful and appealing my products are. Using the online website creator Snappages, I produced a fully functioning website that advertised my collection. This site also included a portfolio of images I had captured and a link to my promotional video. These important aspects have been placed on my website to enable clients to understand the ethos of my brand identity. Not only is the internet an important tool in advertising, television can also be utilised to publicise fashion brands. The fast paced transitions and energetic feel of the promotional video for Pacsun, inspired me to further explore the clothing brand. I wanted viewers to experience this feeling when watching my promo video for the first time. Using Audacity, I edited modern electronic music that complemented the style of my brand and headpieces. This music created an intense atmosphere to the video, effectively engaging the viewers.

The design process is critical when establishing a brand and range for clients. The process of creating the DIA Couture headwear products and collateral advertisements for my brand was successful due to the development of my skills and techniques using different media. Sourcing and critically analysing professional works from a range of practitioners has enabled an outcome that satisfies the parameters of the brief and conveys my personal design aesthetic.